

S.B. 120

## SESSION LAW 1999-433

## AN ACT TO INCREASE THE PENALTIES RELATED TO UNDERAGE DRINKING.

Whereas, underage drinking has always been a matter of grave concern for the General Assembly; and

Whereas, Parents Who Care About Underage Drinking in Catawba County became involved and concerned about recent incidences of death and hospitalization due to alcohol poisoning of teens in their county; and

Whereas, studies in North Carolina indicate:

- (1) 40% of North Carolina high school students acknowledge consuming alcohol in the previous 30 days.
- (2) 12% of the State's 11th graders and 18% of the State's 12th graders acknowledge driving a motor vehicle after drinking in the previous 30 days.
- (3) Over 50% of North Carolina high school students who currently drink began drinking by age 13.
- (4) 79% of high school students say that obtaining alcohol by having an adult buy it for them is very easy and 60% say that obtaining alcohol from the homes of other teens or adults is also very easy.
- (5) 66% of North Carolina teens believe their peers are getting alcohol from someone over 21 who is buying it for them, and 80% of the time it is an acquaintance rather than a stranger that buys it.
- (6) 30% of North Carolina teens say they know a store in their community where someone under 21 can easily buy beer.
- (7) 19% of 17 year-olds report they have attended a party where alcohol was supplied by parents.
- (8) In 1996, more than 200 North Carolina youth were hospitalized for primary alcohol-related diagnoses; and

Whereas, young people who begin drinking before age 15 are more than twice as likely to develop alcohol abuse as those who begin drinking at age 21; and

Whereas, underage drinking is a matter of statewide concern; Now, therefore,

*The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:*

**Section 1.** Chapter 18B of the General Statutes is amended by adding a new section to read:

"§ 18B-302A. Penalties for certain offenses related to underage persons.

(a) A violation of G.S. 18B-302(a) is a Class 1 misdemeanor. Notwithstanding the provisions of G.S. 15A-1340.23, if the court imposes a sentence that does not include an active punishment, the court must include among the conditions of probation a requirement that the person pay a fine of at least two hundred fifty dollars